



North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation
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Michael F. Easley
 Governor

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William G. Ross Jr.
 Secretary, DENR

LAKE JAMES FINANCING IN PLACE

The NC Parks and Recreation Authority has taken a critical step toward the acquisition of 2,915 acres for Lake James State Park by recommending that the state issue up to \$11.08 million in certificates of participation to finance the bulk of the purchase price.

The action commits the state to repay 20-year certificates – which are similar to bonds – with a portion of future revenues into the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

“The COPs methodology of financing is a watershed event,” said authority member Wendell Begley of Black Mountain in making the motion for the recommendation. “This is a real opportunity.”

In August, Crescent Resources Inc. agreed to sell the property on the lake’s north shore to the state for \$18.36 million – far below the appraised value of



STEVE PAGANO, RIGHT, SUPERINTENDENT OF GORGES STATE PARK, TALKS TO PARKS AND RECREATION AUTHORITY MEMBERS DURING A TOUR THERE.

\$30.6 million but still far above the trust fund’s annual revenues available to buy park land.

This will be the first time that such a financing method has been used for land conservation

in North Carolina. The NC General Assembly approved the method last summer (House Bill 1264) partly in anticipation of the agreement with Crescent. The

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PARKS PROJECTS APPROVED

Capital improvement projects for state parks totaling \$12.5 million, and land acquisitions totaling \$12.17 million, were approved by the Parks and Recreation Authority during an Oct. 25 meeting in Brevard.

The projects will affect 19 of the state’s parks, recreation

areas and state natural areas.

The funds earmarked for the projects in 2004-05 reflect a record amount channeled through the 10-year-old Parks and Recreation Trust Fund based on projections by the Department of Revenue.

The fund is supported by

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**THIS EDITION OF
 THE STEWARD
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Department of Environment and Natural Resources

UP CLOSE AND 'PERSONNEL'

Norris Baker was promoted to a Park Ranger III at Stone Mountain State Park. He has a bachelor's degree in physical education from Campbell University and more than 17 years experience as a Park Ranger II with Hanging Rock State Park.

Lynette Hicks was promoted to a Park Ranger II with Stone Mountain State Park. She has a bachelor's

degree in parks and recreation management from Western Carolina University and more than four years experience with Mount Mitchell State Park.

Amy Bleckinger transferred from the Wildlife Resources Commission as an Environmental Specialist I with resource management. She has a bachelor's degree in psychobiology from State University of New York, a

master's degree in environmental management from Duke University and more than three years of work related experience.

Leander Henderson transferred from the Department of Health and Human Services/Murdoch Center to the general utility worker position at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area. He has one year of related work experience.

Tony Bass has begun work as an accounting specialist at the Yorkshire Center. He transferred to the parks system from the Division of Water Quality. Bass has a bachelor's degree in business administration/accounting from UNC-Chapel Hill and brings with him more than 15 years of directly related work experience.

Adrienne McCoig was promoted to executive assistant to the director. She brings with her more than 10 years of related work experience, including 6 1/2 years at the Yorkshire Center. She was formerly administrative secretary to the superintendent of state parks.

Lucy Mantilla was promoted to a Park Ranger II position at Hanging Rock State Park. Formerly a ranger at Stone Mountain State Park, Mantilla earned a bachelor's degree in natural resources/ecosystems from N.C. State University and has more than three years related work experience.

Joseph Paul was promoted to a Park Ranger II position at Hanging Rock State Park. He has a bachelor's degree in recreation management from Appalachian State University and worked for three years at Pettigrew State Park.

From The Director's Desk

It's normally the director's pleasant task at our annual superintendent's conference to hand out service awards, and this year, I had the unusual honor of presenting two 30-year awards — to Jody Merritt of Fort Macon State Park and Mike Seigh of Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. They are now officially among the oldest rats in the division barn, and throughout that barn, we have leaders whose dedication and enthusiasm for their jobs is never questioned.

Just a few days later, I had the opportunity to stop at Singletary Lake State Park where 31 of our newest park rangers were gathered for a week of interpretive skills training. These intensive sessions give polish to our educational efforts with the public, offering the rangers specialized instruction on preparing and delivering interpretive programs. They're also meant to generate excitement for that part of our mission, but it was hardly necessary for this group of young rangers. Their enthusiasm and commitment was reflected in every challenge that they tackled. To say they're highly motivated is understatement.

That causes me to have all the more respect for Jody and Mike (and there are other examples nearing or just past that 30-year mark). Behind all the jaded experience, they've kept a spark of that same youthful enthusiasm for the job and for the purpose of the state parks. They still seem to look forward to going to work nearly every day. It's hard to know if it's a quality in the people we attract or something in the job itself that grows over

Sincerely,



Lewis Ledford

PARKS TOLD SUPPORT STRONG FOR MISSION

Although hamstrung by budget constraints the past few years, the state parks system continues to enjoy the confidence and support of lawmakers and the public in North Carolina, Dempsey Benton told parks superintendents at their annual conference in November.

Benton, chief deputy secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said the support for state parks is often low-key, but consistent, in the NC General Assembly.

Despite legislators' consideration of massive budget cuts for some agencies, "when they get to the parks, they realize they don't want to go there," Benton said. "I'd say that speaks well for what you do day-in and day-out for the residents of this state."

He added, "Legislators know that when they look to invest in the natural resources of this state, you'll be there as excellent stewards of those resources."

Benton was one of a number of special guests at the group's 54th annual conference. The long-standing tradition allows the parks system's managers to gather periodically to exchange ideas, learn of new initiatives and set goals for the state parks system.

In his address on the "State of the State Parks," Division Director Lewis Ledford echoed Benton's theme, noting the 2004 General Assembly's decision to allow certificates of participation to be issued for up to \$45 million in land acquisitions for conservation. The financing is to be repaid with future revenues into the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and two other conservation funds.

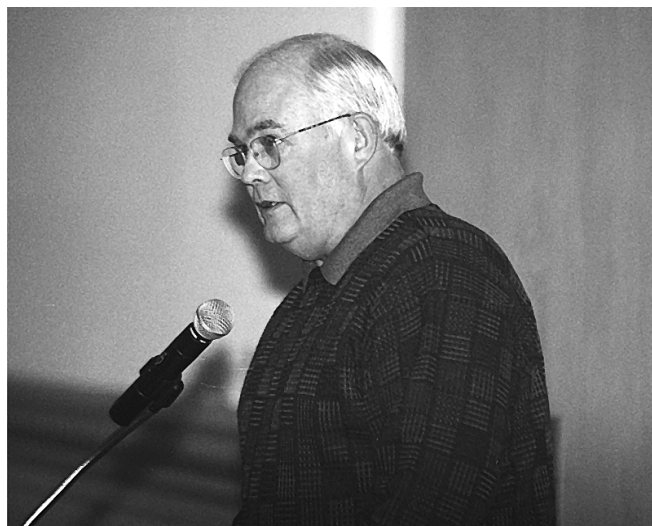
Certificates will be issued for part of the purchase price for 2,915 acres to be added to Lake James State Park.

Another signal has been that the Natural Heritage Trust Fund in October pledged \$4.6 million – the bulk of its revenues this year – to four of the division's land acquisition projects.

"The state parks system, more and more, is recognized as *the* conservation agency in North Carolina," Ledford told the group.

He urged the superintendents to work to strengthen the coalition of state parks, local government recreation programs and conservation organizations. Both are beneficiaries of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Ledford, who moved to the director's position in February after former director Phil McKnelly retired, presented his priorities for the division to the superintendents. Those are:



CHIEF DEPUTY SECRETARY DEMPSEY BENTON WAS A SPECIAL GUEST AT THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CONFERENCE.

-To keep central the division's mission of natural resource protection, environmental education and promotion of recreation.

-To seek innovation in natural resource management.

-To work for pay equity for commissioned staff (rangers and superintendents) as compared to other law enforcement agencies. To that end, the General Assembly has asked the Office of State Personnel to conduct a reclassification study of rangers this year.

-To strive for organizational efficiency.

-To better connect division activities to departmental goals.

-To continue to seek training and growth opportunities for staff.

-To strengthen the public's image of park rangers.

-And, to improve career growth opportunities within the division as a "division leadership legacy."

Susan Tillotson, new superintendent of state parks, told the group that the division has experienced some "growing pains" in the past two decades, with employment jumping from 197 to 405 while the annual budget has more than tripled.

Along with that, the job of park superintendent has grown in complexity, Tillotson said. "We'll try to do everything we can to get you the resources, training and staff you need to do the job."

Two new initiatives, she said, are an internet-based budgeting system for the parks and consideration of an internet-based reservations system for campsites and rentals. Plans for a

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legislation authorizes the state's three conservation trust funds to earmark future revenues for specific purposes.

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund will finance 63 percent of the Lake James acquisition. In early November, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund trustees approved similar financing for 36 percent of the price. The balance will be paid with current revenues of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

In addition, the Natural Heritage Trust Fund Board of Trustees has recommended that the state also use certificates of participation to finance the purchase of 1,425 acres near the proposed state park addition and adjoining the Linville River. The Wildlife Resources Commission will manage the acreage as game lands.

Dempsey Benton, chief deputy secretary for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, told the authority that type of cooperation among the three trust funds is essential to take advantage of land conservation opportunities now.

"I think the philosophy behind this is that there are many valuable areas of North Carolina that may not be available for conservation in 12 to 15 years," Benton said. "It's going to require close cooperation among the three trust funds over the next several years."

Benton will be working with the Office of the State Treasurer to arrange a sale of the certificates in January.

The law authorizes a combined indebtedness

among the three trust funds of \$45 million to purchase land for parks, to build facilities at an existing state park as part of its expansion and to acquire up to 17,000 acres near military bases to prevent encroachment by development.

At a lakeside ceremony Aug. 19, Governor Mike Easley announced the agreement for the Lake James sale after years of negotiations among the parks system, Crescent Resources and Burke County officials.

The acquisition would expand Lake James State Park to nearly six times its current size. At 605 acres, the park has been one of the state's smallest since its creation in 1987. Yet it draws about 250,000 visitors a year.

The acquisition will also protect almost 30 miles of the lake's shoreline. The property lies along the lake's northern shore with views toward Shortoff Mountain and the Linville Gorge, and it includes the Paddy's Creek watershed area and an extensive peninsula known locally as Long Arm.

Currently, the division's planners are evaluating its potential for a network of hiking trails, family campgrounds, backcountry campsites, canoe/kayak areas and swim beaches. An interim management plan will be developed for the property while the park's master plan is rewritten.

The expanded state park would likely become a junction point for three principal trail systems – the state's Mountains-To-Sea Trail, the National Park Service's Over Mountain Historic Victory Trail and the Linville Gorge wilderness trails.

PARKS PROJECTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a portion of the state's tax on real estate deed transfers. By statute, the 11-member authority must approve projects for 65 percent of the trust fund dedicated to state parks. Thirty percent of the fund is set aside for local recreation grants, and five percent is directed to coastal beach access.

In past years, the 65 percent devoted to state parks has been customarily divided again, with 70 percent directed to capital projects and 30 percent to land acquisition. This year, largely because of land acquisition opportunities, the split will be 50-50.

During presentations on the projects to the authority, the state parks staff described the division's methods for setting project priorities: the Project Evaluation Program (PEP) for capital

projects and the Land Evaluation and Acquisition Priority Program (LEAP). Each works to objectively score projects as a method of setting priorities.

Bruce Garner, chief of construction, told the authority that PEP was created in 1986 and is based on a computer model borrowed from the National Park Service.

Each proposed project is evaluated and scored by a team of division administrators using 15 criteria such as service to visitors, public health and safety, resource protection and accessibility.

The PEP list is updated regularly and currently has 235 proposed projects – for new construction or major repairs – totaling an estimated \$328 million.

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SUPERINTENDENTS

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reservations system were placed on a back burner when a budget crisis hit in 2001.

Another guest speaker, Susie Hamrick Jones, executive director of The NC Foothills Conservancy, was presented a State Park Award, for her efforts in arranging the agreement to add property to Lake James State Park. Ms. Jones worked for nearly a decade to build local and state support for the purchase of land owned by Crescent Resources Inc.

Tim McCree, superintendent at Morrow Mountain State Park was recognized with a Special Achievement Award from the division for his initiative in arranging for construction of new piers and boardwalks with a donation from Progress Energy Corp.

Jody Merritt, superintendent at Fort Macon, and Mike Seigh, superintendent at Fort Fisher led the group getting service recognition, accepting their 30-year awards.

Also, Lori Fleming, interpretation and education



SUSIE HAMRICK JONES OF THE FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY ACCEPTED A STATE PARK AWARD FOR HER EFFORTS AT EXPANDING LAKE JAMES STATE PARK.

coordinator of the north district, was presented a “Facilitator of the Year” award from Project Learning Tree. Fleming helped to stage five statewide workshops for more than 70 educators.

PARKS PROJECTS

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Land acquisition needs identified by LEAP total an estimated \$630 million, said Carol Tingley, chief of planning and natural resources. That includes \$176 million to fulfill the master plans of existing parks, and \$454 million for new projects identified through the division’s New Parks for a New Century initiative.

Each potential land acquisition project is also scored by a team, Tingley said, but setting priorities can become as much art as science because of the factors that must be considered – such as landowners’ willingness to sell, the threat to the land from development and potential funding from other trust funds.

Currently, more than 960 separate parcels of land have been scored through the LEAP process. Of those, 107 are considered “high priority.”

Of the \$12.5 million for capital projects approved by the authority, \$3.42 million was set aside for major maintenance, trail maintenance, demolition, exhibit repair, emergency dam repairs and construction reserve.

The remainder was split among projects for eight state parks:

-Gorges State Park, road, parking and utility infrastructure, \$2.96 million. (These improvements represent Phase I of permanent development at the park, eventually to include a visitor’s center, picnic areas and family campgrounds.)

-Hanging Rock State Park, Moore’s Knob Trail renovations, \$281,083.

-Kerr Lake State Recreation Area, Nutbush fee stations, \$405,000

-Lake James State Park, master planning \$145,000.

-Merchants Millpond State Park, visitor’s center \$3.6 million.

-Pilot Mountain State Park, Ledge Springs Trail improvements, \$1.2 million.

-Stone Mountain State Park, Loop Trail design, \$150,000.

-William B. Umstead State Park, Whispering Pines shower houses, \$325,000.

The \$12.17 million set aside for land acquisition is for projects at 16 state parks and natural areas, including new parks in the planning stage at Haw River and Mayo River and including Lake James State Park. There, \$450,000 was set aside to augment financing through certificates of participation from the Parks and Recreation and Clean Water Management trust funds.

Projects will also be initiated at Crowders Mountain, Gorges, Hanging Rock, Lake Norman, Lake Waccamaw, Lumber River, New River, Pettigrew, South Mountains, Stone Mountain and William B. Umstead state parks; at Falls Lake State Recreation area; and at Elk Knob State Natural Area.

SCHNEIDER FILLS JORDAN LAKE POST

Greg Schneider, a 14-year veteran of the state parks system, has been promoted to superintendent at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. He succeeds William Totten who is now north district superintendent.

Schneider is a native of Florida who grew up in Iredell County. He graduated from Wingate College in 1995, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration. He holds advanced law enforcement certification and in 1996 became the division's first certified law enforcement firearms instructor. Schneider is a member of the division's ALERT committee and serves as a Glock pistol and Mossberg shotgun armorer.

Schneider was a seasonal employee in the division's west district before being hired as a Park Ranger II at Jordan Lake in 1991. He moved to Eno River State Park in 1997. In 1998 Schneider was promoted to Park Ranger III at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. He was promoted two years later to Park Superintendent I. In 2002 Schneider was promoted to Park Superintendent II at Jones Lake State Park.

"Greg has served the division well in a variety of parks throughout the state, and he brings that broad



base of experience to Jordan Lake, one of the busiest of our state parks," said Division Director Lewis Ledford. "He is highly qualified across the spectrum of a superintendent's duties, from law enforcement and staff management to natural resource protection."

Schneider has received the division's Special Achievement Award and the Distinguished Service Award. He was named 1995 Ranger of the Year by the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Society and presented with a Meritorious Service Award at the 1998 Park Ranger Training Institute in 1998.

Schneider said he looks forward to the challenges and responsibilities at Jordan Lake.

"My experience has taught me that the beauty and majesty of nature can be found throughout the entire state and that every protected green space is uniquely important to both the current and future citizens of the state of North Carolina. The park manager's role is to balance the need to preserve and protect these green spaces with the human recreational needs and the resultant deleterious impacts," he said.

"At Jordan Lake, I see my role as providing support, direction, and resources to the extremely competent and highly skilled veteran staff which is already in place at the park."

TRIVETTE SUPERINTENDENT AT ELK KNOB

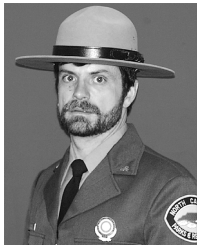
Larry Trivette, a 24-year veteran of the state parks system, has been promoted to superintendent at Elk Knob State Natural Area. He succeeds Mike Lambert who was promoted to superintendent of New River State Park.

Raised in West Jefferson, Trivette attended Appalachian State University and North Carolina State University where he graduated in 1978, earning a bachelor's degree in recreation and parks administration.

Trivette spent his summer breaks from NCSU as a seasonal worker at Morrow Mountain State Park and, upon graduation, became the park's Young Adult Conservation Corps supervisor.

In 1980 Trivette was hired as a Park Ranger I at Morrow Mountain State Park, and in 1982 was promoted to a senior ranger position at Stone Mountain State Park. He managed the picnic areas and family campgrounds at both parks and has been lead interpreter at Stone Mountain State Park for 15 years.

"As a native of the area, Larry knows the people, the institutions and the natural resources very well," said Lewis Ledford, director of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. "Elk Knob has tremendous potential as an active unit of the state parks system,



and Larry is a good choice as superintendent as we make that transition, with the appointment of a citizens park advisory committee and development of a management plan."

The 1,237-acre natural area rises to the second highest peak in Watauga County at 5,520 feet. The land off NC 194 northeast of Boone was purchased in partnership with The Nature Conservancy in September, 2002 and subsequently deeded to the parks system.

The state natural area will also be staffed by Ranger Scott Robinson, a six-year veteran of Lake James State Park.

"I have always been proud of the North Carolina State Park system and what it stands for," said Trivette. "While working at Morrow Mountain and Stone Mountain I have had the pleasure of working with some great parks people that I have learned a great deal from. I enjoy working with the public and feel I will be a positive representative for the park system here at Elk Knob."

Trivette noted that there is opportunity for the purchase of additional land to expand the natural area. "I am really excited about that. The mountains are being developed at an ever increasing rate and I am pleased to be a part of conserving a small portion of our mountain lands and heritage," he said.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS

MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT, OCT. 2004

PARK	OCTOBER 2004	TOTAL YTD. OCT. 2004	OCTOBER 2003	TOTAL YTD OCT. 2003	% CHANGE (2003/2004)	
					OCT.	YTD
CAROLINA BEACH	17,988	202,145	21,299	226,549	-16%	-11%
CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE	8,698	113,357	7,279	107,702	19%	5%
CROWDER'S MOUNTAIN	37,175	317,629	27,909	189,791	33%	67%
ENO RIVER	27,549	260,416	22,694	241,961	21%	8%
OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN	4,462	34,735	4,319	25,472	3%	36%
FALLS LAKE	27,051	658,588	59,225	636,138	-54%	4%
FORT FISHER	50,219	686,758	32,399	684,551	55%	0%
FORT MACON	95,834	1,202,970	90,704	1,160,088	6%	4%
GOOSE CREEK	12,896	122,432	10,072	107,118	28%	14%
GORGES	13,120	123,326	9,258	81,629	42%	51%
HAMMOCKS BEACH	10,062	122,433	10,221	137,592	-2%	-11%
HANGING ROCK	39,694	296,398	40,779	332,286	-3%	-11%
JOCKEY'S RIDGE	54,080	819,969	57,145	978,513	-5%	-16%
JONES LAKE	8,186	91,142	7,672	109,150	7%	-16%
JORDAN LAKE	81,142	895,934	66,544	711,314	22%	26%
KERR LAKE	91,156	1,404,412	72,240	1,167,140	26%	20%
LAKE JAMES	29,541	365,236	29,086	228,112	2%	60%
LAKE NORMAN	34,527	399,804	35,907	331,396	-4%	21%
LAKE WACCAMAW	6,720	85,220	5,098	81,026	32%	5%
LUMBER RIVER	8,409	57,222	5,530	44,536	52%	28%
MEDOC MOUNTAIN	8,380	51,800	5,196	40,272	61%	29%
MERCHANT'S MILLPOND	20,088	175,312	0	133,140	0%	32%
MORROW MOUNTAIN	16,560	240,620	18,770	231,148	-12%	4%
MOUNT JEFFERSON	13,180	84,273	11,894	88,199	11%	-4%
MOUNT MITCHELL	55,158	416,049	148,710	630,257	-63%	-34%
NEW RIVER	25,352	151,202	18,955	145,826	34%	4%
PETTIGREW	4,324	69,730	3,288	76,290	32%	-9%
PILOT MOUNTAIN	53,768	344,440	47,739	348,765	13%	-1%
RAVEN ROCK	11,286	87,664	10,340	92,544	9%	-5%
SINGLETERY LAKE	2,772	33,021	1,547	20,712	79%	59%
SOUTH MOUNTAINS	0	49,194	17,742	161,942	-100%	-70%
STONE MOUNTAIN	42,824	384,680	45,752	336,312	-6%	14%
WEYMOUTH WOODS	4,012	37,907	4,287	27,571	-6%	37%
WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD	36,918	430,022	39,159	361,182	-6%	19%
SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL	953,131	10,816,040	988,759	10,276,224	-4%	5%

Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation is:

to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;

to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities throughout North Carolina;

and

to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources

for all citizens and visitors of North Carolina.

SAFETY ZONE

Keep winter warm and safe

✓ Fall/winter is a time for leaf raking and shoveling ice and snow. Pace yourself and avoid over-exertion.

✓ Use extreme caution when using kerosene and space heaters. Make sure they are cleaned and well maintained and use in well-vented areas. Avoid using them overnight.

✓ Fireplaces and chimneys not used since last winter should be cleaned of creosote buildup and inspected before use.



The Steward

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